Southern History Research Seminar
History 583

Tuesdays, 2:30–5:30

John B. Boles, Fondren 502; office: 713-348-5546, home: 713-664-9038; email: boles@rice.edu

January	8:	Introduction to the Course: discussion of research paper
	15:	Discussion of Winthrop D. Jordan, *Tumult and Silence*
	22:	Book Reviews (individual consultations on papers during week)
	29:	Book Reviews (individual consultations on papers during week)
February	5:	**Discussion of Sydney Nathans, *To Free a Family*, with author.** Afterwards, group dinner.
	12:	Critical Evaluation of/meditation on *Tumult and Silence*; **10-page essay due today**
	19:	Finalizing paper topics, beginning paper outline
	26:	No Class: Spring Break
March	5:	Writing, Framing, Footnoting: Style and Substance
	12:	A Primer for the Historical Profession: Papers, Publications, Teaching, Committee Service, Grants, Promotions
	19:	Class Reports: Problems and Promises of Research, and Epiphanies
	26:	Individual consultations
April	2:	Critique of Research Papers
	9:	Critique of Research Papers
	16:	Critique of Research Papers

Please purchase from Amazon.com: Winthrop D. Jordan, *Tumult and Silence at Second Creek: An Inquiry Into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy*. Revised edition. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995. ISBN: 0-8071-2039-1).

Sydney Nathans, To Free a Family: The Journey of Mary Walker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-674-06212-2).

If you think you need a general refresher on the history of slavery, I recommend Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003. ISBN: 0-8090-1630-3).

Each student will review/discuss two books chosen from the list of readings provided, and these books will be discussed in class on January 22 and 29.

The logic of the course is as follows: The ultimate project will be to write a research paper based on your primary interests, and we will spend much time both in class and individually choosing a topic. The final days of the class will consist of student critiques of the papers. But for the first month—as research topics are being considered and finalized—we will read and discuss one book in common, Winthrop D. Jordan's *Tumult and Silence*, and discuss a series of books selected from the reading list attached. This book is essentially a monograph analyzing a slave rebellion in Mississippi, then following the author's text he reproduces every single piece of evidence he had

at his disposal. He in effect challenges the reader to look at all his evidence and check/challenge his interpretation. That is what I want you to do. **Your 10-page mediation should either corroborate Jordan's interpretation or challenge it,** providing an alternative explanation of what happened in Mississippi in the spring and summer of 1861. We will seek in our discussions to sharpen our analytical skills and consider what makes a good, effective, persuasive book. The paper due on February 12 is more a thought piece than a research paper.

****Primary Assignment: a 25–40 page research paper (double-spaced, with endnotes) solidly grounded in primary sources and of publishable quality. Final version due on May 1.**

Students with disability: Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities should also contact Disabaled Student Services in the Ley Student Center.

Course Objectives: The primary purposes are to learn how to evaluate evidence from primary and secondary sources; how to construct a historical argument based on primary research; and how to write a scholarly paper with clarity, grounded in the historiography, and proper footnoting style and grammar.